

MINNESOTA STATE FAIR

NEWS RELEASE

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Minneapolis Artist Leslie Barlow to Create 2022 Minnesota State Fair Commemorative Art

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St. Paul, Minn. – Minneapolis artist Leslie Barlow has been selected to create the Official 2022 Minnesota State Fair Commemorative Art. Her original interpretation of the Great Minnesota Get-Together will be unveiled at the State Fairgrounds in June.

Barlow is a visual artist, educator and cultural worker. Her life-sized oil paintings are inspired by community dialogue and personal experiences, and often serve as both monuments to community members and explorations into how race entangles the intimate sphere of love, family and friendship. “I often paint the kinds of narratives and portraits that feel underrepresented in our visual culture, images that would have been meaningful for me to witness as a young person,” Barlow explained.

“I’m honored to create the 2022 artwork, and plan to evoke a scene that is full of color, play and reminiscent of my youth,” she said. “The Minnesota State Fair always brings those fuzzy feelings of nostalgia for me. As a kid, every year I looked forward to my whole family getting together at the fair, and it was the kind of anticipation and joy similar to the feelings you get when celebrating a holiday. As an adult, I still look forward to the art, the food, the music, and the chance run-ins with friends and fam amongst the chaos of the crowd.”

Barlow is a recipient of the 2021 Jerome Hill Artist Fellowship, 2019 McKnight Visual Artist Fellowship, the 20/20 Artist Fellowship from Springboard for the Arts, and four Minnesota State Arts Board grants between 2016 and 2021. In 2018, she received the Minnesota Museum of American Art Purchase Award in the juried Minnesota State Fair Fine Arts Exhibition. In 2011 she earned her BFA from the University of Wisconsin-Stout and her MFA in 2016 from the Minneapolis College of Art and Design. In addition to her studio practice, Barlow has taught at the University of Minnesota, Metropolitan State University and Carleton College. She also supports emerging artists at Public Functionary as director of PF Studios, is a part of the Creatives After Curfew mural collective, and is a six-year volunteer for the organization MidWest Mixed. In 2021 she was a participating artist in the Minnesota State Fair’s “Joyful World Mural Park” project at the fairgrounds as one of the 12 local artists painting a large-scale artwork that reflects the world they want to live in. She is represented by Bockley Gallery. For more information visit lesliebarlowartist.com.

The commemorative poster, a limited number of signed prints and other merchandise featuring the art will be available for purchase after the June unveiling. Proceeds will support the Minnesota State Fair Foundation 501(c)(3) mission to preserve and improve State Fair buildings, fairgrounds and educational programs. The original art will be on display in the Fine Arts Center during the 12-day run of the 2022 State Fair. For more information about the fair’s commemorative art program, visit mnstatefair.org/art.

The 2022 Minnesota State Fair Commemorative Art will be the 18th in a series of artwork created annually by Minnesota artists for the Great Minnesota Get-Together. In past years, artists have included: Steve Johnson and Lou Fancher (2004), Mary GrandPré (2005), Nancy Carlson (2006), Michael Birawer (2007), Edie Abnet (2008), Leo Stans (2009), Deborah Voyda Rogers (2010), Steve Thomas (2011), Joe Heffron (2012), Marie Olofsdotter (2013), Emily L. Taylor (2014), Adam Turman (2015), Michael Sweere (2016), Ta-coumba Aiken (2017), Kristi Abbott (2018), R. J. Kern (2019) and Kevin Cannon (2021).

The Minnesota State Fair is one of the largest and best-attended expositions in the world. Showcasing Minnesota’s finest agriculture, art and industry, the Great Minnesota Get-Together is 12 Days of Fun Ending Labor Day. The fair is self-supporting and has not received state government funding since 1949. The 2022 Minnesota State Fair will run Aug. 25 through Labor Day, Sept. 5. Visit mnstatefair.org for more information.